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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this experimental study was to determine the behavioral effects of Yoshukai karate on four dependent variables: (1) student behavior as related to classroom discipline; (2) teacher attitudes toward at-risk students; (3) students' self-concepts; and (4) academic achievement as determined by scores on a standardized diagnostic test. An objective of the study was to provide information which could help educators reach students who were at risk of failing academically, dropping out of school, or becoming delinquent. Subjects were 40 middle school students (grades 7 and 8, ages 13-14) labeled by the school faculty and administration as at risk for academic failure or dropping out. All of the students had been referred to the principal for both minor and major conduct violations. The 20 students in the experimental group received 1 hour per day of Yoshukai karate for 12 weeks while the 20 students in the control group were assigned to 1 hour per day of study hall for the 12 weeks. During the 12-week period of instruction, emphasis was placed upon self-discipline, honor, and respect. Results of the study indicated a significant difference in the classroom behavior and self-concepts of students in the experimental group following Yoshukai karate instruction. Much of this document consists of a literature review; 34 references are included.) (IAH)

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YOSHUKAI KARATE:
CURRICULUM INNOVATION FOR AT-RISK YOUTHS

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Yoshukai Karate: Curriculum Innovation for At-Risk Youths

Purpose of the Study

The at-risk youth in the school is a problem which confronts most educators at some time during their teaching career, and researchers occasionally conduct studies to determine effective methods of teaching these students. The purpose of this experimental study was to determine the behavioral effects of Yoshukai karate on four dependent variables: (a) student behavior as related to classroom discipline, (b) teacher attitudes toward at-risk students, (c) student self-concepts, and (d) academic achievement as determined by scores on a standardized diagnostic test. It was thought that the information provided by the study could help educators in reaching students who were at risk of failing academically, dropping out of school, or becoming delinquent.

Significance of the Study

The researcher became interested in the study while watching a Yoshukai karate demonstration at the middle school. Further investigation revealed that the students who were in danger of dropping out of school or of failing academically were the students who appeared to be the most interested in the program and who remained with the karate instructor to ask questions following the demonstration. The karate instructor stated that he felt Yoshukai karate training would build self-concepts, improve grades, and modify negative school behavior of these students. The school administrators and teachers agreed with the instructor. Therefore, this study was designed to determine the

behavioral effects of Yoshukai karate on at-risk middle school students.

For many years both teachers and administrators have felt the need to vary existing educational curricula to provide the best possible educational program for students. Some students who have not achieved high grades or academic recognition comparable to their peers can achieve success in physical education or physical fitness programs. Students in physical education classes learn skills and gain achievements through the socialization and examples taught in the physical education classes. Many students who do not succeed socially or academically prior to their enrollment in a physical education program find success in classes that stress improvement in attitude and ability. Yiannakis, MacIntyre, Melnick, and Hart (1987) defined this socialization as a "process by which an individual learned the accepted attitudes, values, and behaviors of a society so that one could live in relative harmony with his or her fellow citizens" (p. 40).

Kenyon and McPherson (1987) conducted a study which showed that sport socialization and learning occurred not only during childhood but also throughout the life cycle. The study also showed that once sports behaviors and roles were learned, they were usually enacted in occupational, domestic, and political settings. In the United States, physical education and its interrelated sports have been interpreted within the context of a particular social and political heritage. General Douglas

MacArthur (cited in Edwards, 1987) echoed a similar sentiment when he stated:

> Sport is a vital character builder. It molds the youth of our country for their roles as custodians of the republic. It teaches them to be strong enough to know they are weak, and brave enough to face themselves when they are afraid. It teaches them to be proud and unbending in honest defeat, but humble and gentle in victory . . . . It gives them a predominance of courage over timidity, of appetite for adventure over love of ease. Fathers and mothers who make their sons into men should have them participate in sports. (p. 22).

Edwards indicated that all societies solved the basic problem of regulating human behavior by directing such efforts toward positive accomplishments. In every society cultural blueprints were developed that expressed unconditional ideal norms for success and behavior. Such blueprints involved some definition of a good citizen and thus set the boundaries upon acceptable behavior and goals.

School systems also develop blueprints for acceptable behavior and objectives for educational programs. These blueprints determine acceptable solutions to problems in the secular sphere of life and channel energies into this sphere through sports activities and physical education programs. Many school systems, unfortunately, fail to reach through physical education or academic programs that percentage of students labeled by administrators and teachers as at-risk students. Many theories, proposals, and studies espouse the close relationship

between juvenile delinquency, lowered self-concepts, and lack of success in school.

Schafer (1967) reported that schools often lowered self-concepts or self-esteem of students who became involved in trouble at school simply by lax disciplinary methods, policies, and actions. He stated that many school systems within the United States contributed to delinquency by their failure to draw students back into the regular body of active students after punishing them for deviant behavior. The school's typical practices of public labeling, suspension, corporal punishment, assignment to special classrooms for troublemakers, the cancellation of opportunities for involvement in extracurricular activities, or withdrawal of other privileges often had the predictable outcomes of causing students to reject school and authority even more than they had previously rejected them. Schafer recommended that schools seek a new approach to discipline that would not only improve behavior but also improve self-concepts of all students.

The At-Risk Student

As the number of at-risk students increases, policymakers have begun to notice and research ways to assist these students and encourage them to remain in school. The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL: 1986) was commissioned to brief the Congressional staff on at-risk students, dropouts, dropout programs, and information meriting consideration by policymakers. In the Congressional briefing, members of the IEL stated that every year there are some 700,000 students beyond the eighth

grade who are considered at risk and who eventually drop out of school. These students have common characteristics: most (but not all) come from low-income or poverty settings, have low basic academic skills in reading or mathematics, show limited aspirations and low self-esteem, and perceive that they have little or no control over their futures.

The Congressional brief also reported that the states with the highest dropout rates tend to be in the southeastern United States. These states generally have fewer English-speaking students, and younger and more concentrated populations. Overall, urban students are nearly twice as likely to drop out of school as suburban or rural students. States with the lowest dropout rates tend to be in the Midwest. These states have more rural, homogeneous, and older populations, as well as smaller schools which are closely tied together. "The bottom line is that in America there are school systems that are dangerously high in the rates of their dropouts: some 1.25 million whites, 750,000 blacks, and 305,000 hispanics are at risk in our schools today" (IEL, 1986, p. 9).

Many pupils at risk are involved with the criminal justice system. In New York State alone in 1981, there were over 200,000 juvenile arrests and, in 1982, 85,000 arrests of younger persons under 16 years of age. While these statistics are frightening, only a portion of the at-risk students' problems are recognizable. Some of the problems of the at-risk children cannot be expressed precisely. It is not possible to project the exact number of problems with which the at-risk children must cope on a daily basis. However, the New York State Education

Department (NYSED) admitted that the numbers are considerable, the problems serious, and an expanded school response is necessary (NYSED, 1984).

Newmann (1981) reviewed 13 reform strategies proposed for secondary schools ranging from specialized and alternative schools to specific innovations such as individualized programming, personalized advising, and community-based education. He evaluated the potential of each of the reforms as a way to reduce student alienation and enhance student engagement in the educational process. Newmann concluded that each reform had some strength and potential, but that none of them alone was likely to solve the problem of student alienation for the at-risk student. He believed that at-risk students must become involved with peers in the educational process if they were to remain in school.

Alderman (1990) reported on a Links-To-Success model which served as a guide for fostering students' motivation for success and self-worth. The model, centered on four links to success, promised motivational equity in the classroom. The links of the model are: Link One: proximal goals. Students set realistic goals based on baseline data supplied by pretests. Link Two: learning strategies. Students identify the learning strategies that will help them accomplish their goals. Link Three: successful experience. The student measures his/her success using the proximal goal as the criterion. Link Four: attribution for success. Students are encouraged to attribute

success to their personal efforts or abilities. The teacher's role is to make the appropriate attribution.

The Links-To-Success model helped at-risk students take responsibility for their learning. Although there was no guarantee that miracles would happen using the model, the success rate showed that at-risk students involved with the model accomplished proximal goals and remained in school (Alderman, 1990).

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Students

Mahood (1981) stated that the larger society has only begun to know and understand the student who is at risk in our schools. He suggested that individualizing classes, providing teachers with caring attitudes, helping students develop positive self-concepts, and providing appropriate curriculum for at-risk students would increase the chances of these students remaining in school.

Many educators today probably would agree that students' attitudes, personalities, appearances, classroom academic performances, and behaviors greatly affect teachers' attitudes toward their students. Research on the relationship between teacher attitudes and student performances attests to a similar assumption that teacher attitudes have a definite impact on students' learning and development.

Payne and Caliguri (1978) conducted a study which used a questionnaire to determine if measuring instruments could identify the value clusters in the education setting that were related to dimensions of teaching and learning. The results of this study suggested that high school students retained more

information and desired more formal schooling when they were exposed to teachers who projected a caring image and warm personality, yet maintained firm and consistent discipline (Payne & Caliguri, 1978).

Seif (1979) stated that successfully developed personalized classrooms could be found scattered throughout schools and school districts. When he visited these types of classrooms, he was struck by their consistent patterns and their productive routines. Classroom life was informal, yet highly structured, and children were working productively. There existed an atmosphere of caring and growth and a feeling that significant learning was occurring, often unmeasured by traditional achievement tests.

Seif (1979) designed a study to determine how teachers viewed students (both individually and as a group), themselves, and the teaching and learning process. The purpose was to discover common characteristics in the thoughts, ideas, and descriptions of the styles of these teachers. Eight teachers who consistently and successfully implemented individualized, personalized learning in their classrooms were interviewed for the study. The teachers varied in teaching experiences and represented a cross section of elementary school grade levels, K-6, in Philadelphia inner-city schools, yet all of the teachers demonstrated similar teaching styles.

The results of the study revealed that teachers who used an individualized, caring approach along with a structured, yet open classroom not only helped to keep students interested in their

high school achievement, but also helped potential at-risk students to complete their high school education. Teachers who clarified their goals, focused on their needs and personal development with their children's needs and development, and varied the lessons and school curricula to help children adapt and learn in an unorthodox environment when they had not previously responded to the traditional school programs made a difference in the lives of many children (Seif, 1979.)

Kottkamp, Provenzo, and Cohn, (1986) conducted a study on the views and attitudes of teachers which updated a 1964 landmark study. The baseline survey data were collected in 1964 from Dade County, Florida, teachers. This geographical location was selected for the study because the Miami area was populated by persons born in all sections of the U.S., and the area provided such a rich diversity of school types.

The 1984 survey data were collected from teachers in all 251 Dade County schools. A 40% stratified random sample of classroom teachers was drawn from each school. Principals were asked to encourage teachers to return questionnaires, which were distributed to teachers through the school mail system. Follow-up efforts included mailings and phone calls to schools and homes. These procedures yielded a 64% overall response rate (Kottkamp et al., 1986).

During the 20 years that elapsed between the 1964 and 1984 studies, the teaching profession changed demographically. The 1984 study examined the demographic changes and the changes in the views of teachers on educational issues. Perhaps the most important of these issues involved the changes in teacher

attitudes regarding the type of students that teachers preferred to teach (Kottkamp et al., 1986).

In the years between 1964 and 1984, the student population as a whole changed in Dade County, Florida. "The majority of the students in Dade County schools in 1964 were 'baby boom whites,' while the student population in 1984 showed an increase in the number of Blacks and Hispanics" (p. 562). The study also revealed an increased number of children who were eligible for special education services, causing an increase in the number of teachers trained in working with special education students.

In both 1964 and 1984, Dade County teachers were asked their first preference regarding the kinds of students to be placed in their classes. In 1964, teachers indicated that they preferred to teach creative, intellectually demanding students, while in 1984, teachers indicated that they preferred "nice kids, from average homes, who are respectful and hardworking" (p. 563).

Results of the 1964 study showed that fewer teachers in 1964 placed emphasis on the classroom aspect and behavior shown to them by their students. In contrast, the 1984 teachers who were surveyed indicated that the attitudes of students toward learning, cooperation with classmates, respect for school rules, classroom behaviors, and attitudes of students toward teachers influenced the teachers' attitudes toward their students and the classroom motivation of both teachers and students.

The participating teachers stated that problem students often caused teachers to develop negative attitudes toward the teaching profession, and they indicated that problem students

caused teachers to experience frustration or leave the teaching profession for another professional field (Kottkamp et al., 1986).

Sparks and Rye (1990) stated that teachers spend a considerable amount of time threatening and ordering students rather than providing opportunities that help students develop independence, responsibility, and positive self-concepts. The importance of the development of positive feelings is seen when one considers that student self-concept is a determining factor in school success and relationships with others. "From the extant literature and counselors with middle level students, especially those with 'at risk' behaviors, we believe that student self-esteem is a central component in effective education and for achieving the goals of excellence. Further, we believe student self-esteem is related to teacher self-esteem and that teacher personality factors are tied to student satisfaction with teachers and schooling" (p. 32.)

With this in mind, Sparks and Rye (1990) designed a study which would determine teacher attitudes toward students and student ratings of teachers. Subjects consisted of 163 eighth-grade students from a middle school in southwest Missouri. The students rated teachers on a five-point scale according to the level of satisfaction they felt while a member of each teacher's class. Both students and teachers completed the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, and the teachers responded to the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire and the Myers-Briggs Indicator.

Results of the study showed that students assigned the highest satisfaction ratings to teachers with the highest total

self-esteem scores and to teachers who were enthusiastic, bold, group-oriented, relaxed, and extroverted. Students assigned the lowest ratings to teachers who had the lowest total self-esteem scores and who were submissive, shy, tense, and introverted. Additionally, students who had the highest total self-esteem scores tended to rate teachers with higher scores than students with lower total self-esteem scores.

Implications of the study suggested that teachers today are, out of necessity, assuming more responsibility for developing students into fully-functioning individuals. Implications also suggested that student self-esteem is influenced to a large extent by the self-concepts and attitudes of the teacher and that student self-esteem is a contributing factor to the level of satisfaction a student feels in the classroom (Sparks and Rye, 1990).

Coles (1990) discussed the attributes of teachers who made a difference in the lives of students. He characterized four teachers who made a difference in his life. The first was his father, who taught through self-criticism. He refused to allow his son to believe that he was perfect. His father admitted to a range of emotions in himself, some of which were contradictory, and "done so in a way that was touching and memorable - that last aspect quite important in any teaching and learning exchange between two individuals" (p. 58.)

The second teacher to affect his life was his fifth-grade teacher, who touched the lives of her students through her attitudes toward them and toward life. She was energetic,

harmonious, thoughtful and caring, and she expected obedience. She never expected more from her students than they were willing to attempt.

The final teachers discussed by Coles were his high school Latin teacher and a college teacher. Both men had high expectations of their students, and they conveyed these expectations through modeling. Coles completed his discussion of the characteristics of teachers that make a difference by stating that the attitudes of teachers toward their students and toward the teaching profession determine the motivation, self-satisfaction and success of students in today's classrooms.

Schafer (1967) believed that students' lack of respect for teachers caused negative teacher attitudes toward students who were discipline problems. He stated that delinquency in juveniles was not the result of individual motivation but was produced by social influences and conditions. The most important of these social influences was the home. One way that the family or home contributed to classroom discipline problems and delinquency was by failure to teach and enforce proper respect.

Schafer suggested that if a student did not show proper respect for a teacher and/or administrator, that teacher and/or administrator would develop a negative attitude toward the student, which often carried over into the realm of grades and/or achievement reports. He reported that an improved attitude and a display of respect for the teacher would result in improvement of the teacher's attitude toward the student. Schafer supported other researchers who stated that student behaviors directly affected the attitudes of teachers toward their students and that

the attitudes of teachers had a direct bearing upon the motivation and achievement of students.

Discipline or Classroom Behavior

A major frustration or concern of many educators is the amount of control or discipline that they are able to enforce within the classroom. Many teachers realize that unless they are able to maintain an orderly classroom environment, only a minimum amount of learning can take place.

Hansen (1979) stated that "nothing influences the teaching process and success more than the relationship between teacher and student" (p. 40). The ability of the teacher to maintain a positive intellectual environment will determine the overall success that might be achieved. Conversely, nothing is more damaging than failure to maintain classroom control when disicpline problems interfere with the goals and purposes of education. Hansen concluded that learning could only take place effectively when there was discipline or control in the classroom and that conventional methods of discipline did not work well for all students.

Matthews (1986) contributed to the research conducted on the problems of classroom discipline. She suggested that one possible alternate program for the improvement of classroom discipline might be that of relaxation training. While the term relaxation training conveys the notion of no activity, researchers use the term to indicate a structured and planned strategy for possible improvement or change of behavior. Therefore, Matthews' study tested the hypothesis that there were

fewer discipline problems among students who received the relaxation training than among those who did not receive the training.

A guidance counselor visited classrooms of the experimental group, who participated in the relaxation exercises, and recorded the initial temperatures of the students. Following the relaxation exercises, students recorded final temperature readings. Control group students did not participate in the relaxation training, but participated in regular group guidance activities. At the end of the six-month treatment period in the school, disciplinary infractions involving students in the treatment groups were analyzed according to type of infraction.

An analysis of the data indicated that students were very successful in learning to relax. The control group had significantly more disciplinary referrals than members of the experimental group. Therefore Matthews stated that "the study reveals that relaxation training is an effective method in reducing discipline problems" (p. 199).

DeRidder (1990) studied the impact of school suspensions and expulsions on students' dropping out of school. He stated that no accurate record had been kept on the numbers or causes of expulsions and suspensions in the United States, for each state sets its own procedures in suspending or expelling students. Students who drop out of school have similar problems that have lead to their decisions to leave school. Some of the problems are broken homes, unhappy homes, low reading ability or math ability, and low self-esteem.

Feelings of alienation and low self-esteem are products of poor marks in school. When a student receives low grades, his/her aspirations of success are lowered and should become warning signs to an educator that the child may have thoughts of dropping out of school (DeRidder, 1990).

Researchers have concluded that the students' misconduct in school is a product of their sense of frustrations when their educational needs are not being met and the students are bored in the classroom. Additional frustrations occur when the students or parents are not consulted on the content to be taught in the classroom. When these frustrations mount to the boiling point, conduct often occurs which results in suspensions or expulsions. At this time educators feel that the schools can no longer handle the misbehaving or insolent student.

According to DeRidder (1990), research has shown that the students who are held back to repeat a grade are four times as likely to drop out of school than an average student with similar problems who was not held back. Similar findings are true for the students who are suspended from school. Some states have determined that expulsions deny a student his/her right to an education. The best solution that has been offered by researchers is in-house suspension, which allows the student to attend school for an education but denies certain privileges for a set number of days. "No clear answer to discipline problems has been determined, and the number of students who drop out of school continues to rise each year" (p. 157).

Student Self-Concepts

Theories stating the importance of the self-concept of a person to his/her social behavior, educational achievement, and occupational success have played a significant part in research studies. Several researchers have attempted to show a positive correlation between low self-esteem and youth conflicts. In an early research article related to youth conflicts, Sherif and Cantril (1947) stated that the efforts toward psychological warnings and the establishment of independence from the opinions of adults often led to insecurities and adult-youth conflicts. Their opinions concurred with those of later researchers who believe that when an adolescent received opportunities for activities or guidance which improved the self-concept, he/she would reach adult status reasonably well settled.

Glasser (1965), a prominent researcher in the field of self-concepts, described an approach to dealing with student discipline through the improvement of positive self-concepts. Glasser's Reality Therapy stated that people had two unchanging psychological needs in life: (a) to love and be loved and (b) to possess a feeling of self-worth.

Glasser believed that if an individual could not fulfill one or both of these needs, that individual experienced psychological stress. In order to reduce stress, the individual exhibited four basic symptoms: (a) anger; (b) depression, sadness, or rejection; (c) psychotic behavior; and (d) psychosomatic ailments, possibly leading to overdependence on medication.

Glasser's research findings indicated that no matter what behaviors they chose to exhibit, disruptive students possessed one common characteristic in their efforts to fulfill their psychological needs: They denied or ignored the reality of the world around them. Some students broke school rules and regulations, some claimed the principal and teachers were plotting against them, and some withdrew and became complacent or apathetic. These students denied reality in an attempt to protect themselves from feelings of defeat, loneliness, and insignificance.

The research of Powell (1985) concurred with the findings of Glasser (1965). Powell stated that the self-concepts of American students should be major concerns of all educators. "The majority of America's student population is comprised of the 'unspecial students'. They are not students in the top 15%, and they are not physically or mentally deficient" (p. 255). Because the majority of America's students are average, they have often been overlooked and neglected.

Powell stated that the unspecial American students' self-concepts have been harmed because no adults have helped them select high school courses or plan programs of study. Students have become complacent and apathetic regarding their educational experiences. "These students have felt ignored and have wanted different classroom arrangements, but . . . have felt powerless to bring about these changes on their own" (p. 257).

Powell believed that the only way to help the average student develop a positive self-concept is to consider the high school as a "shopping mall where students shopped for appropriate

courses" (p. 257). Learning would then be considered a consumer choice. If proper guidance is not given to students, they do not select wise choices of courses. Alternatively, students develop apathetic attitudes and negative self-concepts regarding educational experiences.

Powell concluded that when the average student is given special attention and the school day is structured differently from its present form, the self-concepts of average students are nurtured. "Only then would the 'unspecial student' be taken seriously and challenged in the educational environment" (. 257).

Czikszentmihalyi and McCormack (1986) stated that the person who most influences the self-concept of a young person is the classroom teacher. Many times the self-concept is strengthened or destroyed through the efforts of the teacher to pass the central goals of the culture to the student. The researchers believed that students who are academically unsuccessful possess negative self-concepts. To improve students' self-concepts, young people must encounter adults who are enthusiastically involved with spreading knowledge. "When teaching becomes enjoyable and effective, students will feel good about themselves and understand why learning is worthwhile" (p. 419).

Because the self-concept is an integral part of all personalities, students cannot become successful until they view themselves as productive contributors to society. They become productive contributors through the efforts of dedicated, caring classroom teachers who nurture and protect self-concepts. These

teachers often shape the lives and futures of tomorrow's leaders (Czikszentmihalyi & McCormack, (1986).

Student Academic Achievement

Children and youth grow and change in a world that associates success with achievement in school. Many researchers believe that occupational success stems not only from positive discipline practices but also from academic achievement. Pottebaum, Keith, and Ehly (1986) advocated research studies to produce findings that might aid students in successful academic achievement. They conducted a study to define the causal relation between academic achievement and self-concept, for they believed that the notion suggesting the self-concept as a viable mechanism for enhancing academic achievement was an erroneous one. Pottebaum et al. hoped to determine if self-concept and attitude affected academic achievement by having students mark responses to questions related to attitude and self-concept.

Results of the study showed that academic achievement appeared to be a more stable construct over time than self-concept. The results also suggested that there was no significant relationship between self-concept and academic achievement, but rather that an apparent observed relationship was the result of one or more uncontrolled and unknown variables (Pottebaum et al., 1986).

Sleeter and Grant (1986) believed that the U.S. society does not give every child an equal chance to succeed in life. They stated that poverty has always been, and remains, a condition of life and that academic achievement does not eradicate poverty.

Academic achievement gives students a greater opportunity to obtain employment, yet often neglects to condition students to accept the unfairness of the real world. Therefore, Sleeter and Grant questioned whether there exists a condition known as "success for all students" (p. 298).

According to Sleeter and Grant, traditional curricula do not often give students the necessary bases to rationalize or realistically characterize people and events. Therefore, students and teachers should design programs and content for the disenfranchised students to allow them a chance for educational success. Sleeter and Grant challenged all administrators and teachers to collaborate with students in designing and implementing educational programs which fostered lasting success for all students.

Some inner-city schools are developing programs to aid students who desire to go to college, but need assistance with their academic achievement. Many students have the capabilities for higher education, but do not have the access to innovative programs which help to correct educational deficiencies or stimulate an interest in pursuing a college degree. One innovative program for Hispanic students is Project PLAN (Abi-Nader, 1991).

The students involved in Project Plan are Hispanics who attend an inner-city public high school and are enrolled in a college-preparatory program called PLAN, which stands for Program: Learning According to Needs. "They are not gifted or

talented. Most of them are on welfare and come from single-parent homes. But they want to go to college and PLAN is designed to get them there" (p. 546).

The designers of Project PLAN believed that the fear of communicating in English was a great barrier to academic success. Therefore, they devised a three-year sequence of courses in reading, writing, and public speaking that was intended to motivate students to communicate. "The program, which begins in the students' sophomore year, incorporates workbooks, magazines, TV scripts, communication games, and videos to enliven skill-building exercises and stimulate creative activities" (p. 547). Students in PLAN not only graduate, but most of them earn full-tuition scholarships to colleges and universities.

Major points of Project PLAN include the beliefs that Hispanic students need motivation, for they feel that they have no control over their lives. Hispanic students also need positive models and mentors, which are constantly provided in the program. Finally, the art of storytelling is incorporated in Project PLAN to provide opportunities for conversing in English. Proof of the success of Project PLAN is further shown by the fact that 60% to 70% of the students who are enrolled in the program graduate from college and develop goals that last a lifetime (Abi-Nader, 1991).

Organized Group Physical Activity

American educators, surrogate parents in fields of moral education and discipline (Seagrave, 1980), continuously search for innovations or programs to alter negative behavior or

disruptive actions in students. Several studies show that organized group physical activity is a possible deterrent to delinquent behavior. One type of physical activity that might improve delinquent behavior is martial arts training (Huang, 1976).

From the earliest times in China, a type of martial arts known as Tai-Chi Chuan was practiced not only as physical exercise but also as a means to keep practitioners mentally alert and physically calm (Huang, 1976). This aspect of Tai-Chi Chuan was introduced into the physical education curriculum in some Chinese schools for the purpose of teaching students relaxation and concentration techniques. Focusing on specific images and movement qualities enabled the students to develop disciplined concentration, producing a mental calmness which resulted in controlled behavior. Therefore, the training of Tai-Chi Chuan was considered very meaningful in Chinese schools (Huang, 1976).

Aikido is another type of martial art which offers trainees improvement in self-discipline. Linden (1984) stated that he visited Aikido classes in Japan to determine if these classes provided a novel approach to the improvement of self-discipline. Linden admitted that teaching methods which are part of the movement awareness disciplines offer great promise to the field of physical education. He felt that once movement awareness methods of instruction became a part of the traditional school curriculum, teachers would begin to notice a change in student behavior.

One martial arts program offered in several Japanese school systems to satisfy the values education objectives is Yoshukai

karate. The Yoshukai karate style of martial arts was adopted for several school systems in Japan because of its stress upon respect, success, and self-discipline (Yamamoto, 1983). Yoshukai karate stresses the training of one's body and spirit, the setting of a goal, the training and continuous striving for excellence of that goal, and the acceptance of that goal through self-discipline, respect for others, and belief in one's self. Yamamoto stated that the spread of Yoshukai karate to other countries and school systems resulted in an emphasis upon positive classroom behavior.

Trulson (1986), in agreement with Yamamoto (1983), stated that he believed many of the behaviors exhibited by juvenile delinquents would be changed significantly in the positive direction following traditional martial arts training. Trulson designed an experiment to examine whether such training would resolve some of the problems experienced by juvenile delinquents.

The experiment was empirically conducted to determine if there would be measurable differences in either behavior or personality traits of students who "received traditional martial arts training, received non-traditional . . . martial arts training, and [those who] received no martial arts training" (p. 1132).

Data were collected from 34 male high school students, ages 13-17, who were referred by their parents to clubs in several states and who were categorized as juvenile delinquents. Following six months of training by the same male instructor, the author compared results of the students who had received no

martial arts training, received non-traditional training, and received traditional martial arts training.

Results of the study revealed that the students who received traditional training displayed aggressiveness scores below average and positive personality traits that included lowered anxiety, increased self-esteem, increased social adroitness, and an increase in value orthodoxy. Those who received non-traditional martial arts training, in which only fighting and self-defense training techniques were taught, showed a greater tendency toward delinquency and a large increase in aggressiveness. Those students who had no martial arts training showed no personality differences and no increased self-esteem. Therefore, the author stated that "training in traditional martial art Tae Kwon Do is very effective for dealing with juvenile delinquency" (Trulson, 1986, p. 1135).

Description of the Study

Subjects

The population of the experimental study consisted of 40 students, ages 13-14, who were enrolled in grades 7 and 8 of a middle school located in the most densely populated rural area of North Alabama. The 40 students selected as subjects for the study were labeled as "at risk" by the school faculty and administration because they considered these students to be in danger of failing academically or of becoming dropouts after completion of the eighth grade. All of the students had been referred to the principal of the school for both minor and major conduct violations.

The subjects were assigned randomly to experimental and control groups. The experimental group consisted of 18 males and 2 females. Mean chronological age was 14.5, and the mean I.Q., according to official school records, was 110. Fourteen of the subjects were enrolled in the eighth grade, while 6 subjects were enrolled in the seventh grade.

The control group consisted of 17 males and 3 females. Mean chronological age was 14.3, and the mean I.Q., according to official school records, was 108. Fourteen of the subjects were enrolled in the eighth grade, while 6 subjects were enrolled in the seventh grade. Subjects in both experimental and control groups were from lower to middle socioeconomic backgrounds. All subjects were considered by faculty members to be at risk of dropping out of school.

All students who participated in the research study were enrolled in regular classes, which consisted of 4 hours per day of academic subjects, 1 hour per day of physical education, and 1 hour per day of study hall or Yoshukai karate. This schedule remained the same 5 days a week for 12 weeks. During the 12 weeks of the study, the 20 subjects in the experimental group received 1 hour per day of training in Yoshukai karate rather than a study hall class. The 20 subjects in the control group continued with their study hall class and did not participate in Yoshukai karate training.

Data Collection Procedures

Subjects in both experimental and control groups reported to the school lunchroom and were given the Self-Esteem Questionnaire

(Hoffmeister, 1976) to determine the improvement in the self-concepts of at-risk students following Yoshukai karate instruction. The questionnaire was composed of 21 questions that provided information regarding how persons felt about various aspects of themselves such as their capabilities, worth, and acceptance by others. Following the completion of the questionnaire, students returned to their classes.

The following morning students were called to the lunchroom to complete the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (Karlsen & Gardner, 1985) and the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test (Beatty et al., 1985). Each test required approximately 3 hours for completion of all subtests. At this time, homeroom teachers were given copies of the Pupil Behavior Inventories (Vintner et al., 1986) and were asked to complete them as a pretest for each of the 40 at-risk students. These were used as measuring instruments to determine the difference in teacher attitudes toward at-risk students following Yoshukai karate instruction. Discipline violations for the past 12 weeks were compiled from reports obtained from office records and totaled for each of the 40 at-risk students to determine the effects of Yoshukai karate instruction on classroom behavior of the at-risk students.

Throughout the 12-week period of instruction, emphasis was placed upon self-discipline, honor, and respect. Each day experimental subjects were required to demonstrate respect for an elder and to submit to the instructor written proof of the demonstration. Experimental subjects participated in role play and simulation activities, wrote reports, studied both the Japanese and English languages, performed movement drill, sparred

(boxed) with other class participants, and completed oral and written examinations. Continuous stressing of self-discipline, acceptable behavior, and completion of a goal were integral components of the subjects' daily routine.

At the conclusion of the karate training, the Self-Esteem Questionnaire, Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test and the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test were given as posttests to subjects in both experimental and control groups. Homeroom teachers again completed Pupil Behavior Inventories as posttests on the at-risk students. Discipline violations occurring during and after the 12 weeks of karate instruction were totaled for each subject in both experimental and control groups. The data collected for both groups was analyzed and compared using the t test statistical procedure to determine the effects of Yoshukai karate on at-risk middle school students.

Data Analysis Procedures

The Self-Esteem Questionnaire (Hoffmeister, 1976) was the instrument used to collect data relating to self-concepts. Pretests and posttests were machine scored by the publisher. Raw scores from the total language and mathematics portions of the Stanford Diagnostic Reading and Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Tests (Beatty et al., 1985) were used to determine pretest and posttest differences in the performance of experimental and control groups. Diagnostic reading and mathematics tests were also scored by the publisher.

Teachers of subjects involved in the study completed pre- and post-pupil behavior inventories which rated students on

variables including classroom conduct, motivation, socioemotional state, teacher dependency, and personal behavior. The inventories were hand-scored using the key and scoring manual provided by the publishers. Discipline violations for 12 weeks prior to and following karate instruction were analyzed to determine significant differences in the classroom conduct of experimental and control group students involved in the study.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS; SAS Institute, Inc., 1985) program. The program supplied a computer printout which revealed the mean, standard deviation, standard error of the mean, degrees of freedom, probabilities, and levels of significance. Hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

Results of the Study

Results of the study showed that there was a significant difference in the classroom behavior of students in the experimental group following Yoshukai karate instruction. The mean for Class I (minor) discipline violations for the experimental group was 3.1 prior to karate instruction and 1.9 during and following instruction. For the control group the mean for Class I discipline violations was .40 prior to karate instruction and .55 during and following karate instruction. The results of the t test indicated that the classroom conduct of students in the experimental group did improve significantly when compared to students in the control group ($t = .63$, $p < .05$). Because of the findings, it was concluded that experimental subjects received training which altered the usual behavior patterns revealed in the classroom.

Teacher attitudes toward at-risk students were measured by the Pupil Behavior Inventory (Vintner et al., 1986), which rated teachers' perceptions of students on variables including conduct, socioemotional state, teacher dependency, and personal behavior. Results of the t test for independent samples indicated that there was a significant difference in the teachers' perceptions of the conduct of students in the experimental group (t = 2.16) and of teacher dependency of experimental students (t = .76). An important element of the study was the determination of significant difference in the attitudes of teachers toward the personal behavior variable of subjects following karate training. Analysis of the data indicated that there was a significant difference in the attitudes of teachers toward students in the control group (t = 3.24) but not toward students in the experimental group.

To measure the self-concepts of students in both the experimental and control groups, a self-esteem questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire measured students' feelings of self-worth. The results of the data analysis revealed a t value of 2.02, revealing a significant difference in the self-concepts of students in the experimental group after karate instruction, but no significant difference in the self-concepts of subjects in the control group.

It was hypothesized that seventh- and eighth-grade at-risk middle school students who received Yoshukai karate training as a part of the school curriculum would show a significant

improvement in their scores on a standardized diagnostic test when compared to a group of similar students without Yoshukai karate training. To determine scores on a standardized diagnostic test, experimental and control groups were administered complete batteries of reading and mathematics diagnostic tests. Raw scores were analyzed to determine the results.

Results of the data indicated that there was a significant difference in the diagnostic reading scores of the control group ($\underline{t}$ = 2.10) and in the mathematics scores ($\underline{t}$ = 1.05) of the experimental group. Therefore, the null hypotheses in the study were rejected. The following tables contain the results of the data:

Table 1

Results of the Analysis of Data for Hypothesis 1--Improvement in Classroom Behavior

Group	N	Pre $\bar{X}$	Pre SD	Post $\bar{X}$	Post SD	Difference $\bar{X}$	Difference SD	df	t
Class I violations									
Experimental	20	3.10	1.55	1.95	1.15	-1.15	2.00	38	.63*
Control	20	3.25	1.37	2.45	1.00	- .80	1.44		
Class II violations									
Experimental	20	.45	.60	.45	.76	.00	.97	38	.53
Control	20	.40	.60	.55	.69	+.15	.81		

*$p < .05$.

Table 2

Results of the Analysis of Data for Hypothesis 2--Improvement in Teacher Attitudes

Group	N	Pre $\bar{X}$	Pre SD	Post $\bar{X}$	Post SD	Difference $\bar{X}$	Difference SD	df	t
Conduct									
Experimental	20	2.98	.96	3.06	.73	+.08	1.09	38	2.16*
Control	20	3.57	.97	2.91	.48	-.67	1.10		
Motivation									
Experimental	20	2.39	1.10	2.84	.82	+.46	1.61	38	.48
Control	20	2.71	1.02	2.97	.81	+.26	1.17		
Socioemotional state									
Experimental	20	3.54	1.02	3.23	.86	-.31	1.34	38	.74
Control	20	3.74	.90	3.14	.68	+.60	1.16		
Teacher dependency									
Experimental	20	4.20	.71	4.55	.58	+.25	1.88	38	.76*
Control	20	4.02	.90	3.82	.95	-.20	1.34		
Personal behavior									
Experimental	20	2.82	1.21	3.31	.90	+.48	1.60	38	3.24*
Control	20	3.82	1.13	2.83	.46	-.99	1.25		

*$p < .05$.

Table 3

Results of the Analysis of Data for Hypothesis 3--Improvement in Self-Concepts

Group	N	Pre $\bar{X}$	Pre SD	Post $\bar{X}$	Post SD	Difference $\bar{X}$	Difference SD	df	t
Self-esteem									
Experimental	20	2.97	1.65	4.04	1.09	+1.06	1.81	38	2.02*
Control	20	3.58	1.37	3.52	1.17	- .06	1.69		

*$p < .05$.

Table 4

Results of the Analysis of Data for Hypothesis 4--Improvement in Scores on Standardized Diagnostic Tests

Group	N	Pre $\bar{X}$	Pre SD	Post $\bar{X}$	Post SD	Difference $\bar{X}$	Difference SD	df	t
Diagnostic reading scores									
Experimental	20	77.35	9.30	81.90	14.83	+ 4.55	18.63	38	2.10*
Control	20	78.20	12.60	98.45	27.05	+20.25	27.85		
Diagnostic mathematics scores									
Experimental	20	83.60	18.33	93.00	17.04	+ 9.40	28.09	38	1.05*
Control	20	92.55	13.73	93.70	17.65	+ 1.15	20.91		

*$p < .05$.

Discussion/Implications of the Study

In addition to the significant differences found in the study, there were qualitative dimensions of the study which should be given serious consideration. In the first place, the experiment was well received by students, teachers, and parents. For example, prior to the beginning of the karate training, many of the at-risk students were absent from school 2 or 3 days each week. However, during the experiment, the absenteeism rate dropped to one per day. In addition, teachers felt that students in the experimental group were more cooperative and showed greater interest in their work than they had previously shown. One parent, who witnessed a school-wide karate demonstration by the at-risk students, commented that this was the first time she had ever been to school for a nondisciplinary reason.

Additionally, one of the at-risk students had stolen some automobile tires prior to the beginning of the karate class. Following the karate training and without a suggestion from anyone, he apologized to the owner of the automobile and repaid a portion of the loss. Another of the at-risk students who had not been well-accepted by his peers prior to karate training was elected as a student body representative following the Yoshukai karate training.

Many educators in the era of "back to basics" would dismiss the current qualitative dimensions of this study, yet these dimensions should not be dismissed without due consideration. The purpose of education is to assist students in acquiring the

skills needed for living in the technological age of tomorrow. The comment of one at-risk student in the experimental group illustrates this concept by the statement: "I loved this karate class; it has really changed my life!"

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